

Message Text

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51

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SUBJ: CREATION OF BLS ECON/CML OFFICER POSITION

1. BLS EMBASSIES STRONGLY FEEL IT ESSENTIAL THAT POSITION FOR BLS REGIONAL ECON/CML OFFICER BE CREATED AT EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE IF THREE POSTS ARE TO IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVELY STATE/COMMERCE TRADE AND INVESTMENT PROMOTION PROGRAMS. WE UNDERSTAND COMMERCE HAS ALREADY RECOMMENDED CREATION THIS POSITION FOR FY-76 AND PROPOSAL NOW BEING CONSIDERED BY STATE. BELIEVE POSITION SHOULD BE AT FSO-4 OR 5 LEVEL AND OFFICER SHOULD BE ONE WITH PRACTICAL ECON/CML EXPERIENCE. GIVEN THE VERY SMALL STAFFS AND PRESENT OFFICER QUALIFICATION AT BLS POSTS, IT IS DIFFICULT TO "RE-PROGRAM" ALREADY OVERWORKED COMPLEMENT TO PERFORM ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL WORK MORE EFFECTIVELY.

2. TRADE BETWEEN THE US AND BLS STATES IS PRESENTLY SMALL BUT IS EXPANDING RAPIDLY. FOR EXAMPLE, US EXPORTS TO BOTSWANA HAVE INCREASED 77 PERCENT SINCE 1971. WE COULD CERTAINLY IMPROVE ON CURRENT RATE GROWTH US EXPORTS TO BLS STATES WITH A MORE EFFECTIVE TRADE PROMOTION PROGRAM. A FEW EXISTING TRADE AND INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A) LESOTHO - AIRCRAFT, HOTEL EQUIP, AND CANNING EQUIP;

B) SWAZILAND - THERMAL POWER PLANT, MINERALS EXPLORATION

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AND DEVELOPMENT, AGRICULTURAL AND AGRO-INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS,

AIRCRAFT AND AIRPORT EQUIP, AND DEVELOPMENT OF HOTEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY;

C) BOTSWANA - CEMENT PLANT, COMMUNICATIONS EQUIP, EQUIP REQUIRED FOR BUILDING NEW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, TANNERY, MINERALS EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT, ROAD CONSTRUCTION EQUIP, AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AND MACHINERY. WE DO NOT HAVE TIME OR STAFF TO FOLLOW UP EFFECTIVELY ON THESE AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES.

3. AS A MATTER OF POLICY, SENIOR OFFICIALS OF BLS STATES ARE VERY INTERESTED IN ATTRACTING AMERICAN CAPITAL INVESTMENT IN MINING, SECONDARY AND TERTIARY INDUSTRIES. THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENCOURAGING AMERICAN CAPITAL INVESTMENT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF BLS MEMBERSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICAN CUSTOMS UNION MARKET AND ASSOCIATION AND EC ARE SUBSTANTIAL. ALSO BOYCOTT AGAINST SOUTH AFRICAN GOODS IN SOME BLACK AFRICAN MARKETS IS AN ADDITIONAL FACTOR SUPPORTING DESIRABILITY AND PROFITABILITY ESTABLISHING MANUFACTURING FACILITIES BLS STATES FOR EXPORT TO THESE MARKETS. AMERICAN FIRMS SUCH AS JOY, GM, FORD, ARE GIVING CONSIDERATION TO THESE OPPORTUNITIES BUT WE NEED MORE SYSTEMATIC PROMOTION EFFORT WHICH COULD (A) IMPROVE OUR ACCESS TO RAW MATERIALS; (B) EXPAND MARKETS; AND (C) CONTRIBUTE TO BLS ECONOMIC GROWTH. GIVEN CURRENT AND PROJECTED AID LEVELS, WE MUST MOUNT MORE EFFECTIVE EFFORT TAP SPRING PRIVATE AMERICAN INITIATIVE IF OUR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES IN BLS ARE TO BE ACHIEVED. CREATION OF ECON/CML OFFICER POSITION WOULD ALSO DEMONSTRATE TO SENIOR BLS OFFICIALS USG DETERMINATION TO ENCOURAGE US TRADE AND INVESTMENT TO BLS STATES.

4. SINCE 01JAN BLS POSTS HAVE HAD TOTAL OF SIXTY US BUSINESS VISITORS. COMPANIES REPRESENTED BY THESE VISITORS INCLUDED CHASE MANHATTAN, BANK OF AMERICAN AND FIRST NATIONAL CITY BANK; HILTON HOTELS, MOBIL, CALTEX, ESSO, FIRESTONE, US STEEL, BETHLEHEM STEEL AND AMERICAN METALS CLIMAX. GABORONE ALSO HOSTED A TEN-MAN USDOC MINING AND MINING EQUIPMENT TRADE MISSION. WE EXPECT THE NUMBER OF VISITORS WILL CONTINUE UPWARD TREND IN MONTHS TO COME. WE NEED OFFICER CAPABLE OF HANDLING SUCH VISITORS.

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5. IF ONE COMMERCIAL OFFICER SLOT TO BE REMOVED FROM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG, I HOPE IT WOULD BE FEASIBLE HAVE POSITION TRANSFERRED TO BLS. IN ANY CASE, BLS POSITION VERY NECESSARY IN VIEW OF INABILITY COMMERCIAL OFFICERS IN JOHANNESBURG PROVIDE SUSTAINED ASSISTANCE MEETING BLS ECON/CML GOALS AND SMALL STAFFS AT BLS POSTS WHICH PRECLUDE DEVOTING SUFFICIENT TIME AND RESOURCES TO ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL FUNCTIONS.
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